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Statement submitted by Organisation mondiale des associations pour l'éducation prenatale, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2009/100.

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Statement*

Prevention — A Must for Long-term Global Solutions for a Healthy World!

Over the past three decades, science and prenatal and perinatal psychology have shown the long-term effects of the prenatal period on the health, emotional and mental well-being and the creative potential of each individual.

It is during this vital prenatal period (very early childhood) that the foundations of physical, emotional and mental health are established. During this time the child develops the basis of his/her health, emotional sensitivity, as well as intelligence, brain development, creative capacities and the ability to relate to others and the environment. By educating and supporting future parents, we are offering them the chance to participate actively in the health formation of their child.

For the health development of the baby, the mother should eat a healthy varied diet, breathe deeply, have sufficient rest and exercise, and avoid alcohol, smoke, drugs, chemical toxins, stress, violence, dehydration ... all known to have long-term effects on the individual's health.

Emotional development is largely influenced by what the child experiences through her mother's emotional states transmitted through hormones which traverse the placenta reaching the prenatal child and amplifying the state. If the mother avoids prolonged negative (fear and stress) or other painful emotional states whilst encouraging positive harmonious emotions and happiness, the child will receive the happy disposition and acquire «a taste» for happiness. The mother should favour the internal secretion of «love» hormones such as endorphins and oxytocin which are antagonistic with «stress hormones» such as catecholamine and adrenaline. The latter send vital energy to the limbs (fight or flight) leaving less energy available for the healthy overall development of the pre-born. Whilst the mother is secreting «stress hormones» the body naturally lowers the immune response, digestion and absorption are impaired as well as the growth and repair of the cells.

A "no-cost" stress management programme of «endorphin release» should be taught to every family. It is vital to inform, encourage, empower and support a shift in the general awareness of this fundamental process, in keeping with actual scientific discoveries, and make this the basis of health empowerment. The implications on all sectors of society are immense. This economical approach will considerably lower the rate of violence as people will be born feeling safe and nurtured and will naturally seek out the strong hormones of well-being that they will have been bathed in in-utero.

This «preventive approach» would involve all stakeholders and sectors of society.

* Issued without formal editing.